

Sustainable Swindon: Waste less, recycle more.

Waste Strategy 2019 – 2029 (draft)

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Forward by Councillor Maureen Penny

Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment

Waste collection and disposal is a key service provided by the Council to all residents of the Borough. The cost of collecting, recycling and disposing of waste costs the Council around £14million annually, that's around £140 per year for each household. Swindon's population and housing stock continue to grow and therefore the amount of waste we have to collect will continue to increase putting further pressure on our available resources.

As a result of documentaries such as 'Blue Planet II' and widespread concern about plastics, there is a renewed and widespread passion for environmental issues. There has never been a more opportune time to turn this passion into positive action and we want everyone in Swindon including businesses, major organisations, residents and visitors, to recognise that rubbish is not a council problem but a personal choice. As consumers we have a responsibility to consider carefully what we are buying and think about what will happen to these commodities once we have finished with them. We need to think about our impact on the environment now and for the sake of future generations.

Our vision for a Sustainable Swindon includes responsibly dealing with our waste as close to home as possible, encouraging waste reduction and recycling as a priority and only using landfill where it is unavoidable. We have a unique Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) facility in Swindon that processes all our household rubbish into an alternative renewable fuel for industry and as a result we landfilled less than 5% of waste in 2017/18.

The time is right to launch our vision for changing hearts and minds and I am proud to present this Waste Strategy which places behaviour change at the centre of our approach. I hope our residents and businesses will embrace the principle of waste as an asset and be part of our vision to think and act differently regarding rubbish from now on.

Signature

Councillor Maureen Penny, Cabinet Member for Highways & Environment

2. Introduction

Every product purchased has had an impact on the planet from the materials, energy, water used to create and transport the product. Simply disposing of that product after use is a waste of all the resources that have gone into its creation, recycling has a benefit but also uses large amount of resources to transport and process the materials. To significantly reduce the impact on the planet a step change is needed to focus on avoiding the creation and consumption of unnecessary or single use items and to keep products in use for as long as possible, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of life – this is called the Circular Economy.

Keeping resources in use by encouraging recycling is an important aspect of the circular economy, however, Swindon Borough Council's (SBC's) recycling rate has fallen from 48% in 2011/12 to 38.4% in 2016/17. This puts Swindon in the bottom half of all councils for recycling and significantly lower than some of the surrounding authorities such as Oxfordshire District Councils who recycle over 60% and South Gloucestershire who are predicting a 51%+ recycling rate by the end of the 2018-19 financial year. This decline could be attributed to various service changes and lack of communication to residents in recent years, but achieving the national 50% recycling target will require an ambitious and brave approach to dealing with Swindon's waste that places waste reduction at the core, for at least the next ten years.

During the last decade the areas where the Council spends its money have changed dramatically; Central Government funding has reduced while demand for statutory children's and adult's services has increased significantly. It is essential to have efficient and effective waste services in place to reduce both the environmental and financial impacts of the waste generated, ensuring taxpayers' money is spent in the most cost effective way possible.

The way Swindon manages its waste today will not be fit for purpose in the next few years so consideration needs to be given to what will be changed to ensure Swindon's waste and recycling is collected in the most efficient and environmentally friendly way possible. There are four factors to consider that affect how waste is processed, which are:

- Rules and guidance from Central Government and the EU (policy and legislation)
- The technology, markets and options for recycling the waste collected
- Population growth and the number of new houses built in Swindon
- The budget available to deliver the service

The impact of each of these factors will vary over the next ten years. There are a number of promising initiatives on the horizon from both Government and Industry which the Council will follow closely, however there is a need to plan ahead on the basis of what is known

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now. It is important for this Waste Strategy to remain flexible and adaptable to cope with change which is why this document sets out the principles for how Swindon's waste will be managed, and delivery is implemented via annual action plans.

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3. Strategy Aims

The overarching aim of this Strategy is to deliver waste collection services that achieve the best environmental and economic outcomes for Swindon and to increase the Council's recycling rate to 60% by 2029, a year ahead of the national target.

The strategy links to the SBC's vision through the following Council priorities and pledges;

- Priority 3: Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture
- Pledge 13: Find new ways to engage communities and neighbourhoods to increase the cleanliness of their local areas.
- Pledge 14: Encourage Swindon residents to increase recycling and reduce their waste in line with the Council's Waste Strategy. Swindon Borough Council to reduce the use of single use plastics with the intention to stop using such plastics by 2019/20 and encourage local businesses to do the same.
- Value & Behaviours: Connected, Resilient and Brave

The Strategy aims to be ambitious in driving the necessary step change in behaviour by establishing the following key principles to shape waste collection services as they are improved over the next ten years.

Swindon Borough Council will;

1. Place waste reduction at the heart of all services and communications with residents, businesses, and communities in accordance with the Waste Hierarchy.
2. Support innovation in recycling and disposal treatment technology by extending the contract with Public Power Solutions to December 2045 and encouraging the investigation of new and emerging technologies.
3. Lead by example ensuring all Council departments encourage waste reduction and are offered similar recycling opportunities to those offered for domestic properties.
4. Enable residents to recycle more of the household waste they generate by offering easy to use services and opportunities to recycle a wider range of materials.
5. Promote a circular economy by ensuring, as far as possible, the end use of materials collected for recycling are dealt with in the best environmental option available.
6. Take responsibility for Swindon's waste by dealing with it as close to home as possible in line with Localism agenda and ensuring a robust duty of care is applied to any waste exports.

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7. Work with local business to encourage greater waste reduction and recycling practices both within their own business activities and in facilitating desired consumer behaviour.

The Strategy will be underpinned by annual action plans so to remain flexible and adaptable to change, with reviews on at least an annual basis for the first 3 years with progress and further recommendations reported back to Cabinet Members annually. Success in achieving the above objectives will be monitored and measured by a number of key performance indicators.

Table2: Key Performance Indicators and Strategy Targets









Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	2017/18 Bench-line	End of Strategy Target (2029)	Mid Strategy Targets if applicable
LA Recycling Rate	38.4%	60% of household waste to be recycled	50% by 2020, 55% by 2025,
Residual Waste per Household	455kg per hh year	15% reduction of 2017/18 levels	5% reduction of 2017/18 levels by 2020 To be reviewed regularly
Bulky waste sent for re-use or recycling	30%	60% of all bulky waste collected	
Waste sent to landfill	4.8%	Less than 2% of all waste collected	
No of Fly-tipping incidents	Baseline to be established	Appropriate reduction target to be identified according to baseline	

4. The Current Picture

This section provides background information on Swindon's waste and the services provided by the Council.



Table 1: Council Household Waste Collection Services

Collection	Container	Service	Current Destination
General Household Waste		Fortnightly black wheeled bin general household rubbish collection. Blue sacks for properties assessed as unsuitable for wheelie bins.	Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) Plant in Cheney Manor Swindon.
Recycling		Fortnightly recycling box paper/card, glass bottles and jars, tins, cans and aerosols. Textiles placed in carrier bag on top or to side of boxes.	Separated at kerbside, bulked at Waterside Depot in Cheney Manor, Swindon then sent on to various material re-processors.
Plastics Recycling		Fortnightly clear/white sack collection for mixed plastics.	Thamesdown Recycling in Purton, then sent on to various overseas markets
Garden Waste		Fortnightly garden waste collection service for subscribed properties (excluding Christmas/New Year)	Open Windrow Composting at Crappers, Lyneham
Communal		Weekly communal general household waste collections from flats. Weekly blue sacks for those without bin stores. Wheelie bins for separation of paper/card, glass and cans from flats with bin stores.	As general waste and recycling boxes above
Bulky		Chargeable bulky waste collection on request.	Good quality items separated for reuse. Electrical Items separated for recycling. Remainder shredded and as Residual waste
Clinical		On request healthcare and sharps collection	Sent for incineration with energy recovery
HWRC's		Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Cheney Manor for residents to bring bulky waste items in cars. Residential permit service for larger vehicles.	69% recycled, 31% Energy from waste/landfill

In addition to managing waste from households, Swindon Borough Council also provide for the collection, processing and disposal of waste arising from parks, street sweepings, litter bins and commercial waste and recycling collections.

The waste and recycling collected is managed by Public Power Solutions (PPS) who operate the Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) Plant, the Waste Transfer Station, the Recycling bulking facilities and Household Waste Recovery Centre, all based at the Waterside Depot. PPS also provide the staff, equipment and handling infrastructure and deal with the onward transfer, treatment, recycling, re-processing or landfill of all household and non-household waste.

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5. Key Challenges

Some of the actions to be implemented within the first two years are a pragmatic and practical approach to immediate pressing challenges, particularly with regard to waste plastic and the collapse of the global plastics recycling market. A number of other local and national drivers influence *what* needs to be achieved, *how* and *when*. The current key challenges are;

Legislation & Policy

There are a number of policies and laws passed down to local authorities by Central Government and the European Union that direct how councils should manage the waste they collect.



The EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/9, which is enshrined in UK law by The Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011, ranks how waste should best be dealt with. According to the Waste Hierarchy that this Framework encourages Local Authorities to adhere to, the best solution is the prevention of waste in the first place followed by reuse, then recycling. Energy recovery and disposal are seen as a last resort.

The directive also sets a legal requirement for the UK to recycle at least 50% of household waste by 2020. In June 2018 further targets for recycling of 55% by 2025 and 60% by 2030 were introduced by the Circular Economy Package as well as a requirement to introduce separate collections of textiles and 'hazardous' waste by 2025.

While we may be leaving the EU, our government has indicated that these targets will remain.

The Government published the 25 year Environment Plan in February 2018 which set targets to minimise waste, and the overdue Waste & Resource Strategy to be published in 2018 is anticipated to introduce more stringent obligations and responsibilities on producers with the potential of producers helping fund the collection of household waste and relieve some of this burden from the tax-payer.

Population and housing growth in Swindon

There are approximately 100,000 households in the Borough receiving waste and recycling collection services and it is anticipated that 22,000 new houses will be built over the next ten years. That means the amount of waste to be managed will continue to grow and the

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way waste is collected will need to change in order to drive waste reduction and encourage maximum participation in recycling schemes.

Living within the Council's financial means

As central Government funding has reduced and the cost of Adult and Social Care services increases the Council has to save £30m before 2020 in order to balance the budgets. Financial pressures on all service areas, not just waste, necessitates the need for more cost effective ways of working. It costs £6.5million simply to process the waste collected from black bins/blue bags but this cost can be reduced if more of the waste can be avoided or reused or recycled. To this end the Waste Strategy adheres to the Swindon Programme principles of managing demand by encouraging a reduction in the public demand on the waste services.

Markets, Technology and Infrastructure

The ability to recycle materials is dependent on the availability of technologies and markets to accept and process the volume of waste we collect. The 2018 'Plastic Crisis' demonstrated the vulnerability of recycling collections to market factors when China banned imported plastic waste due to the poor quality and high proportion of non-recyclable waste within the material. The UK recycling industry has sought other countries able to take this waste for recycling, however, by the autumn of 2018 these other countries such as Malaysia and Vietnam indicated they may follow China's lead in banning Western waste.

In July 2018, the National Audit Office published a report raising concerns about whether all UK plastic waste exported for recycling actually is recycled, this report coupled with the 2018 Blue Planet II series highlighted the problems caused when waste is not properly disposed of and emphasised that Local Authorities must ensure a high Duty of Care to any waste or recycling that is exported.

6. Achieving the Objectives

There are a number of specific areas that will have maximum impact on achieving the objectives of the Waste Strategy.

1. **Communication & Education** - communication will be essential to keeping residents informed on how to use recycling collection services and to build confidence that the materials collected are actually being recycled. Providing feedback on what happens to the materials and how well the Council, or individual areas/properties are performing will be key.
2. **Service Change** – changes to collection services will drive desired behaviours and keep disposal costs down. They can come in many forms, from changing the number, size, type of containers provided, altering collection frequency, changing the types and range of materials to be collected or introducing new opportunities to recycle.
3. **Partnership Working** - working more closely with other Council departments and stakeholders will be crucial to achieving our goal of a Sustainable Swindon. As waste is a universal issue that affects all residents, communities and organisations, all should be encouraged to play their part.

Some of the specific areas for strategic action to be tackled over the course of the Strategy have been identified and are outlined in the delivery plan, Table 3, below.

Table 3. Strategy Delivery Plan.

Strategic Action	Focus	Detail
Communication	Education	<i>All policy or service changes will be communicated with suitable notice to all affected properties and offer appropriate advice to help residents cope with the changes. Regular communications will provide specific instructions where appropriate, and generally promote waste reduction and recycling as standard.</i>
	Feedback	<i>Feedback will be provided to residents where waste & recycling is not presented correctly or if a bin/bag/box has not been collected for a particular reason. The Council website and social media will be used to provide feedback on progress to achieving the goals set out in each Action Plan and the Strategy as a whole.</i>
	Engagement	<i>Local communities including schools, businesses and organisations will be engaged in campaigns to promote waste reduction, clean streets and going plastic free such as ‘#Refill Swindon’ and ‘#Scrap Fly-tipping’.</i>
Service Change	Compulsory	<i>In 2019 the recycling of paper, card, glass bottles/jars,</i>

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	Recycling	<i>tins, cans and aerosols will be compulsory and SBC will reserve the right to reject black bins/blue bags that contain significant amounts of recyclable materials.</i>
	Plastic recycling	<i>SBC will continue to give consideration to the collection method and treatment of plastics recycling in order to provide the best operational and economic outcome for Swindon and the environment.</i>
	Recycling box charges	<i>In 2019 a charge for each replacement or additional recycling box will be introduced to cover the burden of cost to the Council.</i>
	Food waste collections	<i>Separate collections of food waste for Anaerobic Digestion will be trialled and may be subsequently introduced.</i>
	Service re-design	<i>By 2023 general waste and dry recycling services will be fully redesigned in order to help residents to reduce their waste and recycle more to ensure the most cost effective service delivery in line with new vehicle and fleet configuration.</i>
	Public Power Solutions (PPS)	SBC will extend the PPS contract and work closely with PPS to review the end use and destination of the materials collected and to investigate ways to increase the re-use and recycling of certain waste particularly from bulky household collections.
Partnerships	SBC Facilities	SBC will lead by example and work with the Facilities Department to phase out single use plastics across the Council and to ensure all Council buildings are recycling as a minimum paper/card, glass and tins/cans.
	Planning	The Waste and Recycling Service will work with SBC's Planning Department to develop a waste planning guidance document for developers and Planning Officers to follow.
	Flats and communal properties	SBC undertake to carry out a full review of waste and recycling collections from flats and work with the Housing Department, Property Management Companies and private landlords to ensure, as far as possible, flatted properties have the same facilities and opportunities to recycle as any other property and to reduce the impact of poorly presented waste.
	Local Business's	There will be closer and more coordinated approach within SBC's Commercial Waste service, street cleansing and Enviro-crime departments to educate businesses on their legal Duty of Care, encourage waste reduction and recycling, and reduce litter.

7. Timescales and Delivery

There are a number of actions identified within the delivery plan above and the timescales to implement them will in part be driven by key milestones such as legislation or contractual arrangements. These commitments need to be realistic in terms of available resource, procurement and including trials where applicable.

This strategy will be underpinned by annual action plans in order to remain flexible and adaptable to change, particularly in terms of national policy and legislation. The action plans will be reviewed on at least an annual basis for the first 3 years with progress and further recommendations being reported in order to shape the overall Strategy.

The Year 1 Action Plan is attached to the Strategy (Appendix A) and focuses on the implementation of the most immediate proposals such as improving the communications to residents to encourage and advise them on matters of waste reduction and recycling, compulsory recycling, the way in which plastics are dealt with and the trialling and introduction of separate food waste collections.

Beyond this, the Strategy will be reviewed on at least an annual basis for the first 3 years and future action plans will be produced and tailored in line with developments of technologies, markets, policy and industry thinking in the constantly developing requirements of waste management.

APPENDIX A: Waste Strategy Year 1 Action Plan - January 2019 to March 2020

The Waste Strategy 2019 – 2029 contains a number of objectives and targets which will be achieved via a number of strategic actions. The Strategy will be underpinned by annual action plans so that the Strategy remains adaptable to changes in policy, legislation and infrastructure.

Year 1 Priorities

- Improve communication to residents about using services and encouraging waste reduction and recycling
- Introduce compulsory recycling
- Introduce charges for additional and replacement recycling boxes/lids
- Phase out single use plastics in Council buildings and ensure minimum recycling collections
- Design and procure separate weekly food waste collections
- Give consideration to collection methods and treatment of plastic recycling

Actions and Timescales

Table 1: Detailed Action Plan

Action No	Action	Detail	By When	By Whom
1	Yr 1 Communications plan	Develop 2019-20 comms plan, to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of various service changes e.g. leaflet to each property • Comms materials and enforcement notices • Review and update website • Promotion of waste reduction • Crew briefing and training • Internal staff comms to reduce waste and recycle more • Local business initiatives e.g. #Refill Swindon 	End of February 2019	Comms/Service Area/Cabinet Member
2	Review & Update Collection Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger bin/additional capacity requests • Black bin collection & enforcement policy • Recycle boxes collection & enforcement policy 	End March 2019	Service Area/Cabinet Member

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and additional recycling box requests 		
3	Communication & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver comms plan in accordance with actions and timescales in the action plan 	Ongoing throughout	Comms/Service Area/Cabinet Member
4	Flats Review	<p>Comprehensive review of all flatted properties, to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location, type, no of properties • Property management details • Current waste and recycling collections • Bin store availability/potential • Site specific barriers • Suitability for food waste collections • Create a 'flats' database/records system 	End May 2019	Service Area
5	Compulsory Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate changes to residents • Training crews and waste wardens • Black bin enforcement commences 	Summer 2019	Service Area
6	Introduce charges for recycling boxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online form build • Communicate changes to residents • Extra training and inspections of crews regarding container return • Introduce box charges 	Summer 2019	Service Area/ IT / Comms
7	Lead by Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase out use of single use plastics across Councils facilities • Ensure minimum collection of paper/card, glass, cans from all Council buildings 	End of March 2020	Facilities/Service Area
8	Design weekly food waste collection service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service design i.e. no/type of vehicles, container type, liner provision, treatment facility requirements, tipping arrangements • Identify unsuitable properties e.g. communal • Cost options and present to Members for Cabinet approval • Trial as required 	End September 2019	Service Area/ Finance/Cabinet Member
9	Food waste service procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles/Containers • Treatment facility • Comms materials 	End of February 2020 – tbc	Service Area/Procurement

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10	Consideration of plastic recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for plastic recycling collections and treatment Monitor markets for current plastic collections 	2019	Service Area
11	Anti fly-tipping campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review recording and monitoring of fly-tip incidents Establish baseline assessment Plan 'Scrap' Fly tip campaign using toolkit 	End of March 2020	Service Area/ Comms

Table 2: Overview of actions and suggested timescales

Action No	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20
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